

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 05001 181702Z

51

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 181535Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3956

AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 5001

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS DEA JOHN BARTEL JR.

FOR NEA ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

FOR SY VICTOR DIKEOS

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PINS, LE

SUBJECT: DETENTION DEA S/A JOHN MCKAY BY PALESTINIANS

1. EMBASSY LEARNED ABOUT 6:00 P.M. APRIL 17 THAT JOHN MCKAY WAS MISSING AND SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED THAT HE WAS BEING DETAINED IN SABRA REFUGEE CAMP BY FEDAYEEN. CIRCUMSTANCES OF DETENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

2. AT APPROXIMATELY 6:00 P.M. APRIL 17 EMBASSY CONCLUDED THAT MCKAY WAS MISSING. THE LAST COMMUNICATION FROM HIM WAS A ROUTINE TELEPHONE CALL AT 6:00 P.M. ON APRIL 16. DEA PERSONNEL HAD BEEN TRYING TO LOCATE HIM ALL DAY BUT HAD NOT CONSIDERED POSSIBILITY OF HIS BEING DETAINED BECAUSE (A) MCKAY LIVED IN MOUNTAINS SOME 10 MILES FROM BEIRUT, (B) TELEPHONES WERE OUT OF ORDER IN MANY PARTS OF TOWN AND (C) MCKAY CONCEIVABLY COULD NOT HAVE RETURNED TO BEIRUT BECAUSE OF CRISIS IN THE CITY.

3. DEA SUPERVISOR MARIA WAS INSTRUCTED TO INFORM IMMEDIATELY COL. OSMAN, CHIEF OF LEBANESE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION, THAT MCKAY HAD NOT BEEN HEARD FROM FOR 24 HOURS AND TO ASK HIS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 05001 181702Z

ASSISTANCE. COL. OSMAN AND HIS SERGEANT MADE SEVERAL PHONE CALLS

AT THE END OF WHICH THEY TOLD MARIA THAT MCKAY WAS BEING HELD AT THE SABRA PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP BUT DID NOT INDICATE WHAT PALESTINIAN GROUP WAS HOLDING HIM. THEY INFORMED HIM THAT MCKAY HAD BEEN TAKEN BY THE PALESTINIANS ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 16 AND WAS BEING HELD FOR QUESTIONING. MARIA REQUESTED MCKAY'S IMMEDIATE RELEASE AND OSMAN SENT ONE OF HIS OFFICERS WHO HANDLES LIAISON WITH THE SABRA CAMP. THE OFFICER RETURNED SUBSEQUENTLY TO REPORT THAT MCKAY WAS TO BE INTERROGATED FURTHER BY THE PALESTINIANS AND THAT HE WOULD BE RELEASED LATE THAT EVENING OR THE FOLLOWING MORNING. MARIA DEMANDED MCKAY'S RELEASE THAT EVENING. OSMAN THEREUPON ORDERED THE LIAISON OFFICER TO RETURN TO THE CAMP AND TRY AGAIN TO OBTAIN MCKAY'S IMMEDIATE RELEASE. MARIA ASKED OSMAN TO SEND MCKAY DIRECTLY TO MARIA'S RESIDENCE, AFTER HIS RELEASE. THE OFFICER AGREED. MARIA INFORMED DCM HOUGHTON OF THE ABOVE AT APPROXIMATELY 9:00 O'CLOCK AND RETURNED TO HIS HOME WHERE HE WAITED UNTIL AFTER MIDNIGHT WITHOUT NEWS FROM OR ABOUT MCKAY.

4. AT 8:00 A.M. APRIL 18 MARIA RETURNED TO COL. OSMAN'S OFFICE WHO HAD ALREADY CHECKED ON THE STATUS OF MCKAY AND HAD SENT THE LIAISON OFFICER BACK TO THE CAMP TO SEEK HIS RELEASE. COL. OSMAN RECOMMENDED THAT MARIA INFORM THE AMBASSADOR OF MCKAY'S SITUATION AND SUGGESTED THAT FOR THE TIME BEING THE AMBASSADOR TAKE NO DIRECT ACTION HIMSELF. OSMAN EXPLAINED THAT HE SENT HIS LIAISON OFFICER BACK TO THE CAMP TO OBTAIN MCKAY'S RELEASE AND IF THESE EFFORTS FAILED HE WOULD HAVE THE LEBANESE ARMY OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE PALESTINIAN CAMP TAKE DIRECT ACTION ON MCKAY'S BEHALF.

5. MARIA REPORTED THE ABOVE TO THE AMBASSADOR WHO DECIDED THE FOLLOWING COURSE OF ACTION.

6. HE WOULD BRIEF THE FOREIGN MINISTER WITH WHOM HE HAD AN APPOINTMENT LATER IN THE MORNING ON THE FACTS OF THE CASE BUT WOULD NOT REQUEST THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO TAKE ANY ACTION FOR THE MOMENT. MARIA WAS TO CALL OSMAN AND DETERMINE THE STATUS OF THE CASE. AFTER SEVERAL TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS WITH OSMAN, THE LATTER INFORMED MARIA THAT HE WOULD HAVE AN ANSWER FOR HIM BY 1:00 O'CLOCK. AT 1:15 OSMAN CALLED MARIA AND ASSURED HIM THAT MCKAY WOULD BE DELIVERED TO HIS OFFICE NOT LATER THAN

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 05001 181702Z

6:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME.

7. WE, OF COURSE, DO NOT KNOW AS YET EITHER WHY MCKAY WAS SEIZED BY HIS CAPTORS OR THE NATURE OF THE INTERROGATION. OSMAN THINKS THAT MCKAY IS ALL RIGHT BUT ALSO ADMITS THAT THEY HAVE NOT SEEN HIM. OSMAN BELIEVES THAT MCKAY WAS PROBABLY TAKEN SOMEWHERE NEAR THE SABRA AREA SIMPLY BECAUSE HE WAS AN AMERICAN NEAR A PALESTINIAN CAMP. LT. NUJAIM OF OSMAN'S OFFICE

TOLD MARIA
THAT HE GATHERED FROM HIS TALK WITH THE PALESTINIANS
THAT THEY WERE INTERROGATING MCKAY ON THE SUSPICION THAT HE WAS
SPYING FOR ISRAEL.

6. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER WHEN MCKAY IS RELEASED.
GODLEY

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DEA JOHN BARTEL JR.

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NNN

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